THE TYRANNY OF GOD

JOSEPH LEWIS

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Second edition, May, 1921
Third edition, April, 1922
Fourth edition, January, 1928
Fifth edition, April, 1930

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BY
JOSEPH LEWIS

THE FREETHOUGHT PRESS ASSOCIATION
NEW YORK

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Dedicated

to

Fay

My Dear Wife and Comrade, Whose Loyal and Devoted Companionship Has Made Life Livable.

FOREWORD

Go forth, little book, to destroy fear, prejudice and superstition, and help to install Reason in the minds of the human race to be its guide in the affairs of life and its living.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

THE MOST eloquent testimony given this little book is the fact that a second edition is made necessary only a few months after the publication of the first edition.

Favorable comments and letters of recommendation from men and women eminent in literary and scientific realms, and commendatory reviews in periodicals of high standard are, I think, sufficient cause for the belief that "The Tyranny of God" forms a necessary cog in the machinery of intellectual thought and progress.

Even those who bitterly oppose the book admit that it possesses the power to make its readers think.

Of the many opposing reviews and adverse criticism of "The Tyranny of God,"

not a single one offers an argument in answer to it. For the most part, their characterization has been that it is "pessimistic." As if by calling it "pessimistic," they refute its claims!

If to tell a man the true nature of a disease from which he is suffering, with the hope that he will seek a cure for his malady, is pessimism, then I am a pessimist. Is the use of a danger signal at a hazardous crossing, for the purpose of preventing disaster, pessimism?

If to literally "hold the mirror up to Nature," disclosing Nature's utter disregard for the life and feelings of man, as a warning against the extravagant and useless propagating of life, is pessimism, then surely I am a pessimist.

If a fervent desire to help Man, instead of wasting time in prayer to "God," is pessimism, I am a pessimist.

If to think, to investigate, to express one's thoughts courageously in the face of cent-

uries old dogma is pessimism, then I must confess I am a pessimist.

If to expose sham, hypocrisy and fraud; if to open the mind and free it from fear; if to stimulate the intellect, and work for the Here instead of the "Hereafter"— if all these are classified as pessimism, then truly may I be called an arch pessimist.

"The Tyranny of God" was written to express the truth as I see it—to portray life, not as we would like to have it, but as it actually is.

Millions are still like frightened children, afraid of their own shadows. Fear of the truth is the greatest deterrent to its acceptance.

JOSEPH LEWIS

April 14, 1922

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

I AM indeed gratified to send forth the fourth edition of "The Tyranny of God."

I wish, however, to say to the reader that my book deals with life philosophically and not individually. It was from the viewpoint of life in general and the universe as a whole that the sentiments herein were expressed.

To love God is not the duty of man and one of the most important tasks to be accomplished for the human race is to destroy the Theistic conception of Life and the Universe.

The sentiments I expressed at a memorial meeting in honor of Luther Burbank last May best illustrate my convictions. I said:

"The religious person loves God so vehemently that he has no love left for Man."

May "The Tyranny of God" do much to accomplish the purpose of its author.

JOSEPH LEWIS

January 10, 1928

INTRODUCTION

Where did we come from?
What are we doing here?
Whither are we going?

These questions have puzzled thinking people since consciousness first dawned in the brain. Many have sought to answer them, so why not I? — with the hope that the reading of this book will arouse in the minds of the readers thoughts that will enable them to answer these questions for themselves.

Were you suddenly to find yourself living on another planet, and you were a thinking being, one anxious for knowledge, you would naturally investigate the conditions under which you found yourself, and seek, if possible, a solution for your existence there. Surely it is equally appropriate, situated as we are on this earth, endowed with brains and possessing senses and nerves, to inquire into

and investigate the conditions under which we live, and the purpose, if any, of our existence here.

The peculiarity of this existence warrants such analysis. It is certain, from our understanding as well as from all visible scientific facts, that we did not make ourselves, and that we never had a former existence; and we are led to conclude, in view of lack of credible evidence to the contrary, from those who have passed on, that the future, so far as our individual life is concerned, is an eternal void.

It is also certain, as science has indubitably shown, that we do not make our offspring, that we are not creators, but are instruments merely in producing life.

Furthermore, we did not make any portion of the globe which we inhabit and of which we are a part, and, so far as we are able to determine, all the natural conditions and "raw materials" of our environment are something separate and distinct from any-

thing which we ourselves possess sufficient power to accomplish.

Therefore, since among the organs of my body, there is a *thinking* portion, I am within the bounds of sanity when I investigate and express such thoughts, opinions and findings as my reason and understanding dictate. No one can truthfully say that he possesses sufficient knowledge to account for or to explain the peculiar and mystifying rules, conditions and surroundings which we are *forced* to accept, abide by and live under. And, therefore, the result of one person's findings is worthy the same consideration as those of another.

Upon such basis I submit an honest attempt to express logically my convictions upon this vital and puzzling condition of our existence, and shall endeavor to aid those who read this book to see conditions in what I believe to be their true light, and to stimulate the readers to think for themselves. It is only through the exchange of the results

of investigations, and of honest opinions, that we have been able to add improvement to improvement, and make easier the routine of our lives. The conditions and elements that compose Nature, for the sake of clearness, I will ofttimes call "God." I shall be more easily understood, and at times the term "God" will express more succinctly the thoughts or ideas I wish to express.

THE TYRANNY OF GOD

I

LEST I be misunderstood, I will say at the outset that I do not believe in a God.

The belief in a God is still generally accepted, not because of the existence of one, but for the reason that it is the easiest way to account for our condition. But in the light of scientific discoveries and demonstrations, such a belief is unfounded and utterly untenable to-day. Yet the word "God," and even the word "Nature," must often be used to describe that condition which the brain of man has not yet been able to analyze fully and scientifically. One ridiculous conception of God that is believed by a multitude of people, is that of a massive being, sitting in a marble chamber studded with gold and lighted with glistening crystals. Do those who believe in such a creature

ever consider him taking a bath—and in what? Or of eating his breakfast—and of what it consists?

If there were a God, and the world were governed with stern justice, tempered to our feeble intelligence, existence might become tolerable, but as it is, with a so-called God "ruling above," the earth is an abominable place and life a long series of terrifying torments. If I were to advocate a belief, or faith, in a God, I would seek the embodiment of those things diametrically opposite to the attributes of the popular God of to-day. Such a creature is not worthy the sacrifice of ourselves and our thoughts.

Let us examine and investigate the system and arrangement of the world—that is, that portion of which we are a part and which so vitally concerns us.

The result of our most extensive study and labor shows us that the earth, after an illimitable duration of time, has gradually attained its present peculiar development. In

other words, Nature has taken millions of years to produce the earth as it is now formed; and if it were made particularly for human beings it is not yet completed, for we still find spots, aye, vast areas, where human life is incapable of subsisting. The climate is either too hot or too cold; there is too much water or too little moisture; the means of cultivation are too meager or utterly unobtainable.

In short, after eons of labor, Nature has failed to be able to present to every one of us, for our habitation, a parcel of earth commodious and comfortable enough to be perfectly desirable for life and its living.

Surely, if the earth were made for our benefit, Nature has been not only a very poor provider, but a very thoughtless parent.

Some say that man is Nature's best product, that the earth was made for us, that we are particularly selected by God, and that a certain race is his chosen people. But that is not true. The Jews are no more God's

chosen people than the jay is his chosen bird, or the mosquito his chosen insect.

It is not true that Nature particularly works for us—facts prove the contrary.

Facts prove that we are nothing but an undesirable by-product, to make our way and to live our life as best we can within a cruelly turbulent space, imprisoned by invisible, impenetrable walls of limitation.

No, it is not true that our life is favored by Nature. After we build our homes, make our cities and add improvements, what happens? Nature, with her forceful winds, blows them down; her cruel storms and rising floods wash them away as so much refuse, and a tremor of the earth destroys not only our homes but ourselves also, leaving no traces of our efforts, treasures and sacred ties.

Even as individuals we "curse God" for the shortcomings with which we are afflicted. The exceedingly stout person, one who is "in his own way" curses God for making him so

stout. The thin person has a similar grievance. Those who are too large and those who are too small are equally dissatisfied. The shape of an eye, the curve of the mouth, a blemish here, an impediment there, is the direct cause of poignant embarrassment. Organs or dimensions too unsightly and unsatisfactory are productive of continual worry and torment throughout our lives. The blind, the deaf, the dumb and the crippled have forever a curse for God upon their lips.

We inhabit the air, with a density of fifteen pounds to the square inch, a mixture of dirt and water, in the same manner that the fish inhabits the water and the worm the earth. Were we beings of a superior type, Nature would have made us so versatile that we should be able to accustom ourselves to any condition, and survive in any climate. But despite all our improvements, despite all man's efforts to avoid and escape the conditions of Nature, many of us freeze to death

in winter and become prostrate from the heat of summer. If it were true that the earth were purposely made and existing for us there would be "no flowers born to blush unseen and waste their sweetness on the desert air."

We, ourselves, scientists tell us, are the result of a long series of evolutionary development. They tell us that Nature started with a single cell of protoplasm, a single cell of living organism, and produced the present human species after the life and death of an illimitable number of forms through the stages of countless ages, not exempting those lives from the fear, torture and misery that are still so essential a part of the scheme of life. Why impose so cruel and wasteful a condition upon those numberless billions that have lived before us, since nothing but eternal death was gained by their existence?

Surely, Nature is a poor architect and builder, after taking so much material and so much time, to make such an incomplete

place for such an outlandish form to rule and occupy. If we were given the same opportunity (that is, you and I), with all the power and resources of Nature, to build a habitable place, and mold a living something to inhabit it, our results would be ten thousand times better than that which circles the scope and boundary of our lives, with the incomprehensible physical form with which we breathe and manifest life.

Truthfully, and without the slightest element of egotism, I should be ashamed of my efforts were I to present as my handiwork nothing better than the level and plane which Nature has attained.

II

WE come into this world a tiny bundle and mass of helpless, feeble flesh, utterly unprepared to meet the requirements and fearful conditions that lie in wait for us. We are in need of immediate, urgent and constant help from those who were responsible for our birth, imperatively so from our mother.

The child does not ask to come, and knows absolutely nothing about its welfare. And the mother often does not want to bear it, as she knows absolutely nothing about maternal cares. And yet that mother must go through the "shadow of the valley of death" before she can deliver this tiny bundle and helpless mass of feeble flesh. And how often, aye, only too often, does the mother *enter* the valley of death when making delivery of this living form, never to see the face of the child that Nature imposed upon her to bear!

What a despicable arrangement!

What an unfair bargain!

Can you imagine a more outlandish, ridiculous, awkward, complicated, cruel and fearful system of reproduction than that which we are under yoke to pursue? Without the elaborate details of the perilous stages of life's development, this is the method of incubation Nature imposes upon us. Before the birth of a human being, one male and one female—that is, one man and one woman—must have sexual intercourse. Whether this intercourse is prompted by all the finer impulses of life or is accomplished by the savageness of rape makes no difference to Nature's purpose. To Nature the end justifies the means, and she continues to go about her business.

The male—that is, the man of this pair—can strut and parade with the utmost freedom from his responsibility for the result of his act that Nature has made to be pre-eminent among his desires. But the fe-

male—that is, the woman of this pair—*must for nine months* (just think of it!) carry and develop the germ of this child in the fertile field of her womb, and be subjected to the innumerable terrifying dangers accompanying such a carriage, and then suffer a superhuman torture to make the delivery, through a very meager channel of her body, of this living plant which she has never seen, does not know and quite often does not want, *but must absolutely bear!*

Provided Nature has not made the creature too deformed and mutilated and unable to survive, the mother must, during a period of constant care and *outward carriage,* bear this feeble infant for another period of nine months or more!—suckling at her breast for *food!*

So you see that woman is not only a human being, but a fertile ground and pasture.

I have not gone into the misery of child bearing and caring, nor of the ingratitude that is so often received. I ask for what

reason has Nature imposed this terrible penalty upon woman? *Why?*

Would you, reader, were it in your power, formulate such a method of reproduction?

I'll answer for you:

No!

But that is not all. For years to come, this child that for nine months was carried inwardly and for a much longer period outwardly, by its mother, must now be fed, washed and clothed for an indefinite number of *years,* and guided through a thousand perils and dangers that Nature has set before it, with disease as Nature's agent, crouching and ready to destroy the child's life, not in open combat, but invisibly concealed by the limitation of our senses. This is one of Nature's unspeakable crimes; one of God's despicable impositions.

It is not sufficient that a mother should subject herself to such a dangerous and perilous mission, but she must also withstand the cruel savageness, the cold, callous death

piercings, of Nature's invisible tyrants and destroyers. Life holds but one real attraction, one instance that can be classified above all others. Without this attraction it would be a blessing to choke the life breath from us all. With it we are helped to bear the *Tyranny of God.*

There comes a time to some of us when the heart of the one man beats for the one woman, and there alights and resides in their breasts that spark of devotion that we call "love." When there is born to that union a child, even though in Nature's stupid way, then a bond is created more precious than anything else in this world. Without this little circle of loving joy, the earth is a prison and life a grave injustice for those who must bear it. But think of the damnable rule of Nature that strives and delights in working destruction of the only condition worthy of life's living!

Oh, if only the life of our offspring were more stable, more secure!

If only the bosom of our family were guaranteed to us! Just think! The child the parents would not harm, Nature tortures and God kills!

Looking back upon the path we have trodden, with its continual fight against disease, its manifold combats with obstacles of life, and with its inevitable portion of sorrow we all must bear, we should think seriously and consider the result of our act before we deliberately bring another human being into this life.

You, yourself, do not consider your life worthy of reliving, so why bring a human being here to go through the same, if not more, suffering and misery than you have borne with no resultant good?

III

UP to this point I have been speaking of human beings only, living under improved conditions that man has made. What must be the horror, darkness and emptiness of those living substances that are "inferior" to us? Do you know and realize the suffering that we endure? Then let me, in passing, urge this: Be also kind and considerate to our less fortunate inhabitants of this earth, the "dumb" animals. Their feelings are quite similar to ours. They have gone through the rougher parts of evolution that gave to us our more useful organs and limbs. They are allied to us in much the same manner as the members of our own species. They have their painful aches and periods, their hardships and tortures, their broken family ties and fearful abhorrence of death; their flesh is tender and their skin is as delicate to them as ours is to us.

So let us "think twice," dear readers, before we deliberately harm any of our humbler brothers and sisters that must inhabit this cold and callous earth and live their lives under a great deal more tyranny and injustice than we live ours.

We deliberately enslave and brutally treat the gentle horse.

We tyrannically imprison birds and fishes as "pets."

We keep, breed, kill and eat a variety of animals for our own selfish purposes, and yet some persons still have the audacity to say that we are "chosen people," "God's children," "divine beings." Bah!

You know what painful inconvenience there is in losing an arm or a leg. Well, the winged and footed beings that must bear this life suffer a great deal more than we do when one of their limbs becomes dismembered.

Man has to a degree remedied or replaced his crippled limbs, but I do not think any other of the higher animals have advanced so

far, and as a result these creatures must endure their pain and distressing annoyance to the end.

Recently I watched a common house fly caught upon "fly paper," and studied intently every visible movement of it. Immediately upon alighting upon the sticky substance, its first thought, almost instantaneously, was to make an effort to free itself. At once I thought of the fly's instinct of "self-preservation," and contrasted it with the human's.

The fly must have had intelligence, since it knew that its life was in danger. And, since Nature does not deal in "fly paper," the fly's reasoning power told it of its peril. With unabated determination it vibrated its wings with lightning-like rapidity, and worked its legs unceasingly, *breaking them in the attempt,* in its efforts to pull itself away to freedom!

As I watched this fly in its labor, this thought came to me: Is the fly unlike the

human being in its desire to live? Is it afraid of death and of the mystery of dissolution? Has it, too, all the agony of fear of passing to the "Great Beyond"? Has it, too, an imaginary God in the form of a Big Fly? And is it also afraid of that God's supposed wrath?

If the fly's desire to live is so great, what interest does it have in life?

Does it love? Does it derive happiness when it is able to labor to make happy its fly Juliet?

Does it want to live because it is ambitious and is trying to excel other flies?

Does it really think to better its species and solve the problem of its kind?

Is there a fly family to mourn its death?

While watching that fly and asking myself these questions, I was convinced of the following *truths:*

That the force that we call life is the same that animates the fly. That it, too, has control of its muscles and nerves in the same

proportion as we have control of ours. That it, too, possesses the five senses and adds to its tiny brain more intelligence through its experiences. Within the movements and actions of that fly was wrapped up the secret of "Whence did I come, and whither am I going?"

As I released my attention from that fly, I muttered to myself: "The more I look at insects, the more I think I am one."

For what purpose do *we* arise in the morning, fill our stomachs with food, till the fields, and perform labor in exchange for nourishment, in the evening fall into a sleep from exertion, arise the next day, and perform the same routine, day in and day out, week in and week out, year in and year out, and at the age and in the heyday of physical development seek an outlet in the opposite sex for the strongest impulse that Nature has implanted in us?

This impulse forces us to commit rape and murder, robbery and assault, and to violate

every principle of honor that man has tried to establish for the betterment and advancement of the race.

With the dissipation of this mighty sex force, we subside and decline into weakness and decay, only to pass into death and oblivion.

What a fearful, wasted effort is this life!

IV

THE system of nourishment that Nature has imposed upon the world is not only stupid and malicious, but also of a cannibalistic character.

We, as frail human beings, are horrified and shocked to think that our ancestors trafficked in and delighted in eating the flesh of their race, and even to-day we are making a strenuous effort to discourage the barbarous custom of killing animals to eat their flesh, yet it seems a dictate of Nature that forces us to uphold that custom. Just think of it! Nourishment and life-sustaining forces are derived from eating the cooked flesh of a dead animal, the unborn fowl, the bowels of the lamb, and the eggs of the fish!

Can you imagine the wildness of life in such a jungle of cannibalism? No wonder the savage instinct is so deeply implanted in us.

To get a fair idea of the food we eat to sustain life and to please and satisfy our palates, we need but take a casual glance at any of our modern butcher shops. Although today you will not see human limbs on display and for sale, as they were years ago, you will be impressed with the following morsels put there to tempt your appetite: In our modern butcher shops you will find pigs' feet, calves' brains, ox tongues, breasts and legs of lamb, chicken livers, dogs ground to bits and sold as sausages, live and dead fish of all kinds and varieties and innumerable other portions of animal flesh.

Fortunately we have got beyond the point where we eat the entrails of these animals, although we use their hoofs to make glue, their bones for powder, and we string our delicate musical instruments with their vitals.

The things we consume, in turn consume the living forms that they capture and subdue.

The lion, the tiger and the leopard will de-

vour us more quickly, and with less ceremony and with more delight, than we devour other animals. We, being "civilized," boil the animal's flesh and season it with weeds that Nature allows to grow, to give it zest and flavor, while our wilder brothers eat us in the raw, natural manner, only removing our civilized clothes.

Really, if getting nearer to God is getting back to Nature, the beasts of the fields have an advantage over us. And we know to-day that even the living things in the vegetable kingdom suffer alike from the fearful tortures and penalties of the world. They follow almost the identical routine of life that we follow. Birth, life, reproduction, and death are their lot as well as ours; so that, if man were only to practice the idealism of his cramped and feeble brain he would starve to death!

V

IF the world is the result of an established plan, as some say, it must be the conception of a hideous monster whose three cardinal principles are Disease, Despair and Death. But this much we can say: Though God created us a savage, fortunately man is civilizing Nature's brute and is making him a Man.

Disease is one of Nature's cardinal forces. So, to attain health, we struggle against disease; but health only means the guarding of it through fear. "With all the ills the flesh is heir to," true health is a chimera, an existing state unknown to man.

To be "well" is such a precious condition, that Nature cautions us against expecting to retain health too long, by instructing us, through experience, to prepare for a siege of illness. Thus, disease and illness would seem to be the natural states, and health the arti-

ficial condition under which Nature permits us to live. No one goes to his grave without suffering the tortures of some disease and paying the penalty of living. No one is exempt from the inflictions Nature imposes.

The greater portion of our life consists in devising means and medication to relieve us of our states of ill health and disease. Sanitation and all the methods we are capable of discovering and inventing are becoming universally applied to kill and to destroy the menacing germs that God causes to inhabit the air, and that breed and multiply in the fertile flesh of our bodies.

And finally, we are so utterly ignorant of how even to eat, sleep, walk, breathe, stand or sit, that the slightest infringement of the simplest rules of life can, and does, cause us irreparable harm.

If we did not move to help ourselves, Nature would have us live in filth and stagnation.

We seek, discover, or invent all kinds of

methods to build health and to remain perfectly strong throughout our lives, and yet, despite it all, we are puny and sickly beings. In fact, I do not think there is such a thing as perfect health. What we may do to correct, insure or perfect our healthy tissues will have a detrimental effect upon some other part of our body. What we do to build up must also tear down. What we do to produce health will, after a certain point, produce disease. This, it seems, is the law not only of life, but also of the universe.

It is regrettable that God did not possess the magnanimity of an Ingersoll and make health contagious instead of disease.

Physical pain and mental suffering are the mysterious sorrows that we must experience and pay to a tyrant God for the existence we bear. It is incontrovertible that no realization is given us by Nature of the fearful pains and tortures that we are capable of suffering and still sustain ourselves, only to repeat over and over again the unending tor-

ment in exchange for the consciousness of a worthless life.

We, with our limited intellects, with our puny strength, with our inability to utilize all the materials in our possession, are still superior to the workmanship and the justice of God.

Tyrant is no name for such a God, who creates a living organism purposely and maliciously to torment and torture it.

A poor creature is a God who makes his suffering playthings more powerful than "he," and compels them to bear their existence under the lash of inexorable laws of sorrow and suffering, pain and penalty.

And yet we are satisfied with so little. We ask for a crumb only. We are pleased with the slightest favor. A toy delights us; a little trinket elicits from us warm gratitude; a breath of balmy air is drunken with keen and pleasurable delight; a "fine" day is celebrated with exultation!

But what a mockery is life!

We writhe in pain and bear the brunt of an arrogant tyranny from whatever force that created and controls us. We must daily bathe our bodies, wash our hair, brush our teeth, change our clothes and perform other necessary physical functions to feel freedom from the filthy conditions that Nature imposes upon us and surrounds us with.

If Nature saw fit to give us eyes, she should have given us perfect ones; not those which, upon the slightest contact with a minute foreign substance, cause unutterable pain and possible loss of sight, in a world where sight is so imperative!

If Nature saw fit to give us ears, she should have given us perfect ones; not those which are capable of such frightful pain, with the possibility of becoming totally deaf, when it is so necessary to hear!

If Nature saw fit to give us a nose, she should have given us a perfect one; not one that causes such miserable torture and unbearable suffering from the slightest defect!

If Nature saw fit to give us a mouth, she should have given us a perfect one; one that would perform all the functions of perfect speech; not one that is so liable to harm and so susceptible to dumbness, when speech is of such paramount importance to Life!

If Nature saw fit to give us teeth, she should have given us perfect ones; not those which ache and pain with such fearful intensity that the mind is almost distracted!

If Nature saw fit to give us arms, legs, and organs, she should have given us perfect ones; not a body whose tenderness makes it an instrument of such menacing torture; not a body of crippled bones and crippled joints, where suffering results from everything it does!

If Nature saw fit to give us a brain, she should have given us one strong enough to withstand all the rebuffs of life, and one capable enough to utilize all the forces under command. Each person should be a mental Hercules capable of solving his own prob-

lems and directing all matter to its greatest material uses.

Instead of the human body being the marvelously constructed instrument we are wont to believe it, we now find it to be nothing but a common machine, imperfectly made, and subject to innumerable changes and radical improvements.

Every person acquainted with the anatomy of the body can give you a list of imperative improvements that it needs, and without which it will continue to function imperfectly and continue to cause pain and suffering to its possessor.

It were a great deal better, after a full summary of life, were we to be created utterly devoid of feeling, equally impervious to joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain. We should be manifestly benefited, for the greater part of our life is now full of sorrow, anxiety, fear, pain, disappointment and worry.

A small portion of our life is a matter of

indifference. A portion might be termed satisfaction, and a minute balance, an infinitesimal part, termed—if there is such a thing in life—joy.

And yet, the joy we may experience to-day will not be present to-morrow to cheer and comfort us, but the pain that we feel to-day will pinch us more strongly to-morrow, and will remain as an ever-poignant memory.

Joy and pleasure are of a transitory nature only, while pain and sorrow are of a permanent and accumulative character. Is *all* of life worth the sorrow, the agony and fear of death?

Just think of giving a life so full of grief that those who have it do not want it and quite often destroy it! No wonder that drugs more powerful than our minds, used to numb the pains of life, are so much in demand and so universally used.

What a ridiculous assumption it is to think that a soul, separate and distinct from the

body, would imprison itself in such a miserable confinement!

Instead of life's being a privilege, it is a prison, wherein we must suffer fearful pains and still more fearful thoughts. Physical pain registers a high degree of intense feverish suffering, but mental torture is fired with the scorch of hell.

VI

HUMAN life is the cheapest thing that God makes! No consideration is given to the feelings, pains and sorrows it must bear and endure.

No wonder that ridicule, shame, hatred and other forms of mental suffering cannot be withstood by some frail minds, and cause them to seek relief from their torment.

Under the red-hot brand of mental torture, the jealous husband sees his wife violate every rule and principle and vow of virtue. He sees her reveling in the arms and embrace of him that he despises, committing trespass upon the one he so loves.

The husband suffers more mentally in a few moments of these imaginings, than the actual performance, with his full knowledge, could cause him to suffer.

Losses, mistakes, discouragements and dis-

appointments scorch with burning blisters the lining of our lives.

I once thought it was cowardly to make destruction of oneself, but I must say that more mature thought, supported by actual scenes and experiences, has caused me to alter my view.

But before I go farther, let me make my thought clear so as to avoid any misunderstanding.

I do not mean that a person should shirk his or her duty in the face of hardship, discouragement or rebuke. On the contrary, the mettle of the man is best tested by such adverse forces, and some of the most inspiring moments of life lie in overcoming these conditions and triumphing over unjust, undue and seemingly impossible odds. What I do mean is, when life no longer holds any attraction, when the ravages of disease have torn and mutilated your body, when pain and torture are raking your mind, and your daily companions are these miseries, with no

possible hope of their relief or change, then by all means, by whatever agency you desire to accomplish it, save yourself the terrible agony of living, and defeat one of the tyrant impositions of God.

VII

THE child suffers the sharpest pains, the cruelest poignancy that could possibly be inflicted upon its body, through the stupid, frightening and monstrous tales that are continually told to it to make it "good," to make it "obey."

To think that a child cannot bear to enter the dark, cannot bear to be alone, cannot bear to be separated from its loving and protecting parents, and yet must suffer in a few moments from a fatal disease—the agony of all this, in the face of death, is the crime of crimes, too damnable and horrible for words.

I remember once seeing a little lost child. It cried for its mother. Hot tears were streaming down its burning cheeks. Its face portrayed the severest form of suffering that life is capable of experiencing. If Nature ever made a frail article, it is our tender offspring, so bewildered, so utterly helpless, so

agonizingly delusioned, so pitifully searching for some familiar face; something to make it discover its lost self. Oh, what power ever made us so tender, so incapable of self-help, as to have us undergo and feel such terrific suffering! It is injustice enough when adults are made to suffer mental and physical ills, without inflicting such a painful decree upon mere infants.

At least an adult has some conception of his suffering. He can make provision for some remedy. He can seek others to ask them to render help. He knows, he feels, he understands the situation, and can adjust himself as best he can to obtain some relief.

But not so with the child. Its mind is not capable of comprehending the condition which makes its suffering so sharp. Its little brain is too feeble, hardly strong enough to direct its awkward and bulky body, much less to solve such an incredible predicament as being utterly destitute of help, in a world fashioned upon such an unsatisfactory plan

There is not, nor can there be, a sadder, more distressing sight, than to see a little lost child overcome with fright.

If it were in my power to abolish any of Nature's cruel laws, I would take from the little child its feeling of pain.

Let me ask, would man, were it in his power, send a helpless creature, utterly unable to sustain itself, without power of thought, understanding or expression, so dependent upon loving care, kindness, help and comprehension, into a world that is a wilderness, a world reeking with pestilence and populated with shrieking beasts and brutal and savage people?

As a passing word regarding the child, let me say this:

Do not judge your child as an ordinary mechanical instrument, as if he could be wound up to a certain degree and gradually, as if by clockwork, tick away each moment of the day. The child is a combustible force, and, although there are certain rules by

which you may obtain the greatest degree of improvement, you cannot rigidly adhere to them. There are numberless instances when the propensity or inclination of the child may appear to you to be aggravating and annoying; nevertheless, you must not let *your* irritability interfere with the development of that trait preëminent to the child's character.

Look upon your child, encourage your boy or girl, to be a pioneer and a soldier in the march of progress. Instruct it with the knowledge of the miserable conditions of our past history, and bring it forcibly to understand that efforts only are repaid, and that we must work in order to accomplish.

Prayers are only wasted words on the desert air. The greatest mental crime ever committed is that of teaching a child, "while still upon its mother's knee," its duty and obedience to God. It would appear that for the amount of suffering it must endure,

and in the face of its unconsulted coming, we should at least disregard God for his insolence, and impress upon the child the peculiar conditions of life. We should instruct it, that from time immemorial, Nature has been laboring through the most awkward process of reproduction, and has finally brought the child into existence, not to enjoy the benefits, or eat of the fruits of the earth, but to bear a life of continual strife and suffering. Not of God should we speak to our child, but of the importance of being prepared to do all in its power to help others to escape the torture, misery and hardships it must so painfully overcome. Is it any wonder that we grow up to be serfs and slaves? Before we are able to know or understand the very rudest fundamentals of life, our entire mental machinery is corrupted by unshakable fears and dedicated to the vilest and most sickening submission. Would that we were left alone, and free to follow the thoughts of our own minds, re-

garding the great problems of life. What a mighty, unhampered power we would possess to find the proper course of action, and possibly the real solution to the mystery of the *Tyranny of God!*

To love and to reverence our tormentor is repulsive and despicable, and since we refuse to allow man to tyrannize over man, what degradation it is for the human race to cringe and bow down unconditionally to the imagination in the great realm of uncertainty!

Do not hurt your child. Do not strike it. Do not cause it any unnecessary pain. Before it is able to walk, before it is able to talk, before it is old enough to tell of its pain and suffering, Nature makes it endure enough.

Remember, the only language of the babe is the cry of pain.

Imagine yourself under the lash of suffering, utterly speechless and incapable of conveying your wants and feelings to an abso-

lutely strange surrounding, and you will have a slight picture of the growing child in your household. Did you ever stop to consider that the child, when born, does not know that you are its parent? It does not know that you are its father, or that you are its mother. It does not know what prompted its birth, or why it must live—and above all, what it has done to be sent to such a miserable prison place as the planet upon which we live. We must demonstrate all this as well as we can to the child.

This much we can be sure of: kindness, tenderness and love should forever be our guide in our dealings and contact with children.

The child is brought into this world from the insuppressible passion of two people, and surely without its consent, and it is absolute tyranny and barbarity to torment its mind or to punish its body, regardless of the result its action may have upon us.

To the little children that have suffered the

horrible punishment so generally followed in that cruel and false book—the Bible—my heart goes out in pity, since words fail me to describe those savage characters that visit inhuman, tormenting and torturous treatment upon their unwelcome offspring.

If we were forced to perform the thousand tyrannies that are directed against the child during the day by cruel and thoughtless parents, the lunatic asylum would soon be our place of refuge. Such trivial things as a spot on the shoe, a speck of dirt upon the clothes, a mere tip of the hat, a slight turn of the scarf often give rise to such violent reprimand, and very often brutal punishment, that the savageness of barbarians is mild compared to such displays of temper.

My heart again goes out to you, little children, when and wherever you are, that must bear the brunt of brutal actions from stupid and thoughtless parents and guardians. These people seem to classify children in the matter of discipline as grown ups, thinking

(or, rather, not thinking) that children's undeveloped minds should be as strong as theirs, when they themselves are unable to practice the self-denial that they expect from mere infants.

How often does a child receive a slap in the face from a parent for the asking of only a simple question, when the parent is not in the "humor" to "bother" with him?

What a painful and terrifying beating does a child often get for disobeying some arbitrary command uttered by the one over him. To the child, "Don't do this," "Don't go there," "Stand up straight," and "Say this" are commands that carry with them court martial and its severe and unrelenting punishment.

Remember this: The child will respond to kindness and love more readily and directly than to force and unwarranted discipline. It is purely a question of whether your feelings are actuated by these impulses.

If you have become mentally strong

enough to restrain your impulses to strike your child, do not substitute other means to "punish" him. Changing the method of brutally inflicting physical pain upon your child to some other means, though less repulsive, is still obnoxious and harmful.

If you are unable to convince your child, by persuasion, example or otherwise, that you are right and that the child should follow your instruction, then by all means, let it become the victor in the contest.

Fear—fear of pain, fear in every form—controls our lives, and shapes the courses of our puny destinies.

VIII

THE mind, through fear of death, is capable of suffering, within a few moments, the tortures of an eternity, although to accomplish death, Nature may require only a few minutes. The extent of the mind's capability for suffering is beyond compare.

Nature has been distinctly conspicuous in imbuing us not only with grave doubts and uncertainties, but also with an unshakable fear regarding death. In the deepest moments of despair, when living has absolutely no attraction and life becomes a burden and a menace, we fight desperately, and without abatement, for this narrow, worthless thread of existence.

Possibly the fear that we have in the face of death is caused by the fact that we must suffer pain before death is accomplished. And a great deal of the theory of "self-

preservation" is due merely to our great horror of pain.

The indisputable fact that thousands "take their lives" by choosing the least possible painful method demonstrates, with a firm conviction, my thought that it is the avoidance of pain, rather than the retaining of life, that prompts our efforts to live.

It is only too true, and heard from the lips of thousands, that if they "could only lie down and never awake, what a blessing it would be." We speak in terms of "having lived too long," "being tired of living," "life not worth living," etc., as if life were a prison sentence, and, often, rather than continue the servitude, we surmount and overcome the deterrent of pain and destroy the life.

Very often our desire to keep on living is prompted by our baser impulses. We "live" sometimes to "get even" with someone—to spite someone. We "live" sometimes to be able to "show" what we can or cannot do. Were it not for these baser impulses, what an

unlimited number of people would refuse to continue this monotonous, painful and non-paying life!

The foregoing expressions of life, at one time or another, represent the feelings of all humanity. In the United States alone during the year 1920 it has been conservatively estimated that more than twelve thousand persons committed suicide. These persons were engaged in all kinds of pursuits and came from ALL walks of life. They ranged from social outcasts to society leaders; from poverty stricken unfortunates to persons of great wealth; from illiterate men and women to editors and college professors; from laborers and layman to physicians and ministers. The youngest suicide was a mere infant of five years, the oldest, a centenarian of 106! Among the suicides of last year were two evangelists and twelve clergymen. It would appear that those who had devoted their thoughts and services to God would at least be spared the agony of such suffering as to

force them to prefer death and to take their lives. I say with Ingersoll, it is a wonder God does not at least protect his friends and defenders.

The reluctance we have to die is due in a large degree to the possibility of securing a few more moments of joy from an already too much troubled world, with the hope that a little compensation will be derived from the pain and sorrow we have endured.

And yet those things that we may live to enjoy to-day and to-morrow may likewise be present to thrill us at some future date, away and beyond the limitation we are capable of surviving. It is from this desire that we unconsciously "feel" that we would like to "live" always, to get our full measure of return; and since such is neither the lot nor the privilege of our possession, it really makes no difference when we die as far as personal satisfaction is concerned.

The fear that possesses us now in the matter of death will likewise and with equal

force possess us later, when we actually and without ceremony must submit to the inevitable.

The desire that possesses a person to live now will, with equal attraction. obsess him later.

Our desires and aspirations are never satisfied. What we may cherish to accomplish to-day may be consummated and achieved, yet to-morrow another something will demand our energies to be spent for further desires to be accomplished.

When we are babies we desire to walk; when we walk, we desire to talk; when we talk, we desire to grow; after we grow, we want to learn; after we learn, we want to do and to expand—and our performance and expansion are only curtailed by insolent death!

IX

THE only justification there is to live, once conscious of the damnable scheme of life, is the burning desire to do something to help mankind bear the conditions and to make easier the burden of life for those who are here and for those who are to come; for very often the greatest benefactors of the race are so maligned and persecuted in their day that only the future can render a just appreciation of their labor and their value.

For without the improvement bestowed on life by the world's benefactors, over the crudity of Nature, it were better that we remain in the bosom of our wilder brothers, and hang from the trees by the length and the strength of our tails. Aye, back and back and back, down every degree of life until the time before the first cell of protoplasm from an inanimate into an animate state started.

Why must we be made to suffer such dreadful torment before death, since by eternal decree it is the common lot all must endure?

Death, puzzling, eternal death, is Nature's final stamp upon our fearful struggle through life.

And the agony of death is more poignantly mental than physical, since the mind, reviewing the acts of the past, anticipates with anxiety and with picturesque vividness the wrongs, scandals, terrors, fears and injustice of the future.

Since life is so replete with physical pains, no wonder our picture of death is so horrible.

We see upon the lifeless form the cast of its agonizing pain, and augur from that an eternity of sorrow. But fortunately, in reality we can only feel pain as long as we possess "life." In a sense, therefore, death is a blessing.

After all, the severest pains of death lie in the brains of the living. The mind is of

pable of suffering in one moment all that a lifetime can repay with pleasure, and no joy is sufficient in value to compensate you for enduring an irreparable loss.

The conditions that existed before our birth are identical with the conditions that will exist at our death. As we knew no life and felt no pain before our birth, we shall know no life and feel no pain after our death.

Death is no longer the enigma of life. Living is its problem. The sting of death has been removed. We know death's destiny, and no longer fear its consequences. The only suffering attached to death now is the injustice of its time of coming, the reluctance of parting with loved ones, and the loss of the opportunity to attain. Well might I say with Shakespeare, that:

"Cowards die many times before their death;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come."

The most despicable characters of human life are those who prey upon credulous persons when in the face of death and shrouded with the fear of its uncertainty, picturing to those persons horrible and frightening tales of an eternity of torture.

What unspeakable misery must those whose religious conviction has so terrified death and its aftermath, especially when it is intensified and horrified through the mouthpiece of ignorant priests, suffer in consequence of death.

Oh, what a fearful sting must be there!

Just think what this poor, vast, credulous multitude pay, with the sweat of their brows and the bend of their backs, to enrich these moral beasts in exchange for their ignorant and terrifying mumblings, that rob the deluded ones of every fiber of courage and every thought of perfect peace and rest.

It is while living that death possesses its sting and anguish. Anyone that seeks tribute from the dying, or from the living for

services on behalf of the dead, is a damnable moral scoundrel and a cunning rascal.

To those whose minds have been poisoned from childhood with this religious conviction, this most awful of beliefs, I cry: "Throw off these tyrants of the mind. Emancipate yourselves from this fearful ignorance and mental bondage!" What a burden will be lifted from their lives and what a glorious freedom they will experience!

If we are to die, let us die in perfect calmness and in perfect peace. Let us become firmly convinced that, once we are dead, no thought, no act, can possibly harm us. We are beyond the pale of Nature's pangs. We, the individuals that we were, are free from everything. We are at rest, and forever.

X

BUT after this life with all our pains and sorrows, what then? What is there to repay us for living?

I answer:

Nothing!

I have no misgivings about the "future." I am firmly convinced that there is no "after life," that when we "breathe our last" we arrive at our eternity. We are "one with yesterday's seven thousand years." We are like the flower which, "once blown, forever dies."

I firmly believe that life as now manifested in our bodies is a combustible force identical with that of any other form of life. No less so than the "seed" of the flower is different from the "germ" of the wheat.

Both are forces!

So are we!

They may be different manifestations, but fundamentally they are the same.

In fact, the very force that manifests itself in a mechanical instrument made by man is the identical substance that rules the organs, and charges the brain of our being. In the same manner that the force dissipates itself in the mechanical instrument made by man, and no longer gives motion to its parts, so the force that animates our being dissipates itself and is no longer capable of giving motion to our parts and organs.

As man's instruments are dependent upon many channels for their complete performance, so the human brain and body have their many dependencies that must fully and properly be nourished to maintain their power.

Each day science draws another veil from the mystery of life.

Our eye is but a chemical camera, that we have not only reproduced, but even improved upon.

Our voice is nothing but a vibration, that we have not only reproduced and improved

upon, but whose minutest modulations we have recorded in innumerable duplications.

Our ear is but a drum, that carries and conveys to the brain the vibrations of our voice, and that function we have reproduced and even improved upon by the instrument we call the telephone.

The telegraphic system of the human body that communicates to the brain the conditions that the senses perceive, is no other than that which man has even improved upon by the transmission of an intelligible message to a far-distant land without the use of any apparent conductor. With the marvelous instrument, the telephone, man sends his voice around the world.

Man's greatest inventions, the phonograph, the camera and the telephone, both wire and wireless, make the work of Nature, as manifested in our bodies, a simple, childish affair, fit only for the kindergarten of things.

When Edison invented the incandescent

light and reproduced the human voice in the phonograph he pulled aside the veil of secrecy and penetrated the infinite.

He proved and demonstrated man to be greater than God.

Our limbs carry our bodies in the direction our brains dictate, and *that* function we have reproduced and even improved upon in all the means of locomotion that we daily use and which we now consider as a "matter of fact" among the ordinary things of life. "Comparisons are odious" when we compare the awkward motion of Nature with the rapid locomotion of man.

Man progresses far too rapidly for the accommodation of Nature, and as a result adapts for his use and benefit vital essentials that Nature in her laziness has either failed to utilize, or will not utilize.

Although we have not yet completely discovered all the material and mechanical elements that compose life, we are sure and certain of their origin.

We hear ourselves talk; we decide upon our destination and direct our motion; we eat when we are hungry; sleep when we are tired; cry when we are in pain; and laugh when we are tickled. Our whole being from start to finish is mechanical, and the element of something "spiritual," something separate and distinct from a purely material sense, is absolutely illogical and ill-founded in view of the illimitable illustrations that are being demonstrated every day.

It is a thing easily understood, if we logically, and intelligently, without blindness, preference or prejudice, analyze the problem.

It may sound better and more desirable to say that we possess a "soul"—that this life is but a "stepping stone to a higher plane"—but it is not true.

We cannot observe the true, actual facts of life by coloring our subject. If we want to determine the *truth* we must be mentally prepared to accept the *truth*.

A painted face, brightened eyes, blackened eyelids, Marcelled hair, and a form draped in all the splendor of the finest silks do not make a woman possess the sweetness and charm that all this "dope" is intended to make us believe.

As much as man wants to have the end of this life attain certain benefits and destinations, this desire does not make them real.

The implicit confidence in a faithless wife does not make her loyal and virtuous. A wife's confidence in a profligate husband does not make him stanch and true.

Life calls for a cold analysis. It must be stripped of all its artificial colorings and superfluities. It must be measured and weighed for what it actually is, not for what we would like it to be. It must be determined in the unwavering scales of science.

The proper study of mankind is not the man in the white starched collar, with trimmed hair, shaven face and polished shoes, but the man recently from the forest, with

coarse, grizzly hair upon his back, brutal and violent passion dominating his body, and savageness and hatred in his startled and terrifying eyes.

The sooner we come to the realization of this vital fact, the sooner we become acquainted with the basic origin of life, the sooner we shall understand life, with its achievements, with its aspirations and hopes.

XI

IT is an absolute fact and certainty, impossible of refutation, that when animation ceases in the body and no effort is made to revive it, life ceases and the processes of decay and decomposition set in.

Yet it is permanently established and has been successfully demonstrated innumerable times, that certain methods of artificial stimulation have revivified and resuscitated the delicate organs that cause the heartbeat and give consciousness to the brain.

Recently my local newspaper contained the following item:

"DEAD" BUT SAW NO SPIRITS

Oklahoma City, Okla., February 7th — Neal Dillingham doesn't believe in after-death communication with the living. Dillingham was "dead" for twenty minutes recently, and he says he ought to know.

Doctors said Dillingham's blood circulation was stopped by a clot of blood. His heart stopped beating, and he did not breathe.

Insertion of a saline solution into his artery just

above the heart caused the clot to dissolve, and Dillingham came back to life.

"I did not return to earth after I left it," said Dillingham. "I had no knowledge of anything that took place, but I must have been pretty dead, as I do know I didn't recognize several persons I had known all my life, after I was myself again. If I had any talks with anybody while I was 'dead' I don't remember anything about them."

Believing that the publicity that this case received would make the party known to the postal authorities, I sat down and wrote him a letter, hoping that, if fortunate enough to have a letter delivered to him, he might be kind enough to write me personally of his experience.

After a lapse of several days I received from him a letter substantiating in detail all that was mentioned in the newspaper clipping quoted above.

In the instance of this man Dillingham, he was "dead," so to speak, and as far as his "soul" was concerned it had "left" the body; yet the injection of a material solution, compounded by man, in conjunction with arti-

ficial respiration, caused the beating of the heart and gave back to the brain its power of consciousness.

If it is the "soul" that causes the functioning of the body, where is it when such an action takes place?

If it is the "soul" that gives us "life," how is it that we can materially and mechanically destroy it?

We are born and nourished by material means.

We live our life by material means.

We reproduce our kind by material means.

And we can destroy ourselves by material means.

Everything that touches and concerns our life is purely material, and it should be incumbent upon those who believe in the "Soul" or the "Spiritual Element" of man to produce the proof of their contention.

We are nothing but a continual propagating instrument, without spiritual, moral, lasting or ultimate value. We are here to re-

produce our kind and for nothing more. What man secures for himself within the narrow circle of his existence here is all that he gains for the life that Nature forces him to live.

Everything man has, man has made. Nothing has been given to him by Nature. God has been a miser!

If man possessed a "soul" the thousand deformities of the brain would not exist. Insanity would be impossible, and all the forms of petty vices that so miserably afflict us would be totally unknown.

That which gives us the power of life is a combination of the material forces of Nature, and the elements that compose the brain are of a chemical substance. The difference between a "live" person and a "dead" one can be summarized by a great many instances about us, and because of their commonplaceness, we do not observe them.

There are many apples falling to the ground, but we are not inspired with the

knowledge that the actuating force is gravity.

One of the best illustrations, to show the difference between a "live" and a "dead" person, can be had from that excellent invention called the "film" or "plate," and which is so remarkably used in the camera.

When that sensitive composition of chemicals that forms the "film" and which produces such a vivid and lasting likeness of ourselves is freshly made, it possesses that vital something we call "life."

But allow this film to remain unused for a period of time, and it will no longer be able to perform its remarkable work. It will not possess the "life" to take a picture or to record an impression.

If a premature "exposure" of the film is made, it loses its vital quality because of the mixture with other elements, or because of the evaporation of its constituent parts.

It is not necessary to analyze all the properties of that film to show the principle

whereby it performs its wonderful work. The general principle, showing its marvelous use while intact and its utter uselessness when its composition is no longer the same, should be sufficient to illustrate the comparison.

This illustration can with force and conviction be applied to the peculiar quality and nature of our "soul" and brain. As long as the brain is incased within our skull, and fully protected from contact with any other substance to alter or to change its integrity, it will perform all that is warranted of it. In the case of our brain, though, besides the importance of keeping it protected from outside chemical action, the vital element concerned in its continuity of life lies in the importance of keeping it constantly nourished and supplied with the remarkable qualities of the vital substance of blood.

The moment the blood supply to the brain is stopped, our brain loses its most important constituent, with the ultimate and inevitable

result of inertia, decomposition and decay. When this condition happens we are then "dead" and, like the proverbial egg, "all the King's horses and all the King's men cannot put Humpty Dumpty together again."

If we possessed a soul, and it were of a permanent and special quality, it would maintain its impressions and remember its existence.

It could pass through innumerable periods and know its many and varied journeys.

Even memory, so unreliable in our short life, bespeaks the utter impossibility of such a thing as a soul with a permanent and lasting existence.

That which we call the "soul" is nothing but a chemical composition, that can and *does* lose its permanency while we are still alive.

We are acquainted with a number of chemical compositions that must remain in a pacific state to maintain their identity, so those chemical forces that compose our

"soul" must perforce maintain their equilibrium.

If we are stunned, or suffer any of the many conditions that upset chemical compounds and compositions, we, for the time being, suffer either "unconsciousness" or some other form of mental disability.

If we are shocked too severely, we become totally and permanently impaired, and suffer violent fits and fearful rages, insanity or imbecility.

Different shocks, and even forms of disease, result in certain action upon our chemical brain, which causes it to lose only part of its ability. Extreme high fever is only one form of illness which causes the brain to lose its stability and run rampant and unbridled.

If I were fully cognizant of all forms and degrees of disease, I could recite exactly how they act and in what degree they harm the delicate organism of our brain. In many instances shocks or diseases too powerful for

our brain to withstand, cause that portion of our brain that may control our speech, our sight, our hearing, our limbs or other organs to lose its power, with the consequence that we must suffer and be handicapped with what is properly called "a great affliction."

Science to-day has discovered that great truth, and has not only catalogued the different portions of the brain in their individual departments or capacities, but, by a master stroke of surgery, can correct and remedy those impaired parts, and give back to the human being the use of those valuable organs that the invisible agents of Nature had taken away.

So, instead of the brain's possessing a "soul," we find it, only in a more delicate degree, a mechanical formation such as we discovered our body to be.

But if we possess a soul and it is capable of passing through the many and varied stages that life suffers, what becomes of its

impressions? What and where are the benefits of its retention?

Where is the soul when we are in a state of unconsciousness? Surely, if the soul were ever present to guard and maintain life, it would be standing by and using its power when it is most needed. We have no occasion for help when we are not in danger. It is when power can be used and exercised that it should be manifested.

Even love, the great compelling force of our life, is subject to the variations of our chemical "soul," its attractions and repulsions.

If two form the unit of reproduction, and love is the great mating medium of Nature, then once it is animated, once it is brought into existence, it should endure permanently, and the possessors should at least enjoy their blissful companionship until the end. But no. Nature would entice, and then destroy, this most consuming feeling of life.

Two persons can start life with the most

irresistible attraction and irrepressible love and within a very short time, unless they guard their love with every means and weapon of advanced thought and reason, Nature, through her duplicity, will provide searching eyes to alienate their affection, causing a wretchedness unparalleled in the mental miseries of mankind's life.

The saddest state of all is when two persons, with the sacred devotion of love, cohabit and the happy result is loving children, and yet while this happy family, free from Nature's pitfalls and snares, are living in a peaceful and blissful state, there exists the ever-menacing "devil" who tempts the loving wife and mother to follow the will-o'-the-wisp—and thereby undoes and destroys the greatest kingdom of life.

The devoted husband and father, by the flash of an eye, and the charm of a face, can forsake his sacred ties of devotion and become a degenerate and outcast, with death as his only salvation. In either case Nature

stands by with a sneer upon her lips, and God forgets his obligation to his children. But the final analysis proves beyond doubt that the physical attraction is responsible for this action; and who can deny that it is the chemical attraction of two forces that produced this irresistible desire?

XII

IF the life we live be a kindergarten or infancy of a larger and better life somewhere else, Nature defeats her own ends, because myraids pass on, leave here, with the most dwarfed intellects, utterly unprepared to live here, and much less prepared to live in a higher state and on a more lofty plane.

Were such a condition true, that this is but a transitory existence, we should all have to go through the same schooling of life, and be indelibly impressed with its lesson, with conviction and understanding that the same mistakes would never be repeated, or the acquired knowledge would be constantly and forever used.

There would be no deaths in infancy, as each child born would be purposely sent here; neither would there be premature

deaths, as no one could leave without "learning his lesson."

There would be a fixed standard of knowledge and development that we would be required to attain. Knowledge, or whatever condition Nature imposed, would be our destiny, and we would devote our entire life to its acquirement.

As it is, we bend our efforts and use our strength to avoid and to escape the acquisition of knowledge.

If our life were given to us in order to pass through a school of experience, the simplest truths would immediately manifest themselves to our minds, and conviction would be instant and permanent.

But how sadly untrue is this premise!

For thousands, aye, for millions of years, the people have been stupefied with the most ignorant and foolish superstition. An instance that will present with great force an illustration of the utter folly of the contention that we are living on this planet as a

lesson in school, lies in the fact that for thousands of years people not only believed but religiously guarded the belief that the earth was flat.

Even to-day, with irrefutable demonstrations of the truth, there are some people who either cannot, or will not, accept it.

As desirable as this theory of a transitory state may be, it is even contrary to Nature herself. The entire scheme of Nature seems to be fashioned upon the same principle as our life. The fearful struggle of the elements involved squares identically with our own existence. Even the gigantic constellations, flying with an incalculable velocity, leaving destruction and desolation in their tracks, meet in their ignorant and blind journey the same fate as we meet. Recent astronomical discoveries speak of a struggle constantly taking place in those areas.

The belief of an existence after death is so untenable in the face of many scientific discoveries of to-day, and of the irrefutable

facts that are constantly staring us in the face, that an instance or two are all that are necessary to prove the fallacy of such a belief.

Under many circumstances we are unable to recognize our own blood relations after a lapse of a certain length of time. Parents fail to know their children; and children their parents. This is equally true in every comparison and degree of relationship. Features and characteristics undergo such a decided change and transformation that recognition is ofttimes even impossible. Even the law courts are continually called upon to determine the proper identity of persons, to establish the ownership of property by other means than by personal identification. Most remarkable of all, under new conditions, we do not recognize ourselves within the interval of only a few seconds!

Try this if you would seek proof, and convince yourself that recognition of your own personality is momentarily impossible, and

that you must resort to other senses than that of sight to identify yourself.

Put a wig upon your head, blacken your face, "make up" your features, and when you have finished and are completely unaware of your changed appearance, look into the mirror for your reflection and feel the sensation of the startling fact that you know not yourself.

We speak of changes so radical in a person's appearance that we often say we could not recognize him "in a thousand years."

What a ridiculous presumption it is, then, to maintain that we live after death when *all* senses are gone and perception is dead!

Again, how anyone can say that when we die we go to "heaven" is too childish to consider, because when we die, instead of going up and to heaven, we are put deep into the ground to moulder and to rot away.

What a far-fetched conclusion it is to assume that we live after death, minus all the physical characteristics and under conditions

utterly incomprehensible to our minds! Even if, at death, the body turned into invisible gases it would mean and prove absolutely nothing.

If we live after death, by what means can one person communicate with another?

We cannot feel, because we have no hands.

We cannot see, because we have no eyes.

We cannot smell, because we have no nose.

We cannot hear, because we have no ears.

We cannot taste, because we have no mouth, no stomach.

But, with it all, these five mediums of sense are dependent upon a *living brain.*

The fact that we suffer the loss of our senses even before death, because of the complications in the make-up of our body, should be sufficient proof of the nonexistence of a soul and the utter impossibility of a life after death.

Unless we retain and maintain our sacred ties after death, another life is valueless and void, useless and unnecessary. It is a fearful

sadness to think that the ones you love are to pass away into nothingness and be no more; that the sparkling eyes will be dim forever; that the rosy cheeks will no longer glow with radiant health; that the ruby lips will fade into a deathly blue, motionless and forever still; that dimpled hands and loving arms will never encircle you again, and the supremacy and tenderness of your love must be crushed with a cold and callous ferocity.

But, sad and mournful as it is, with the human heart beating hopelessly against hope for only one more chance to kiss and caress and love the one you so dearly cherish, it is nevertheless only too poignantly true that death ends all.

Death means nothing to the affairs of the world.

To be taken from amid the world in such an ever-living condition as now exists, is like taking a cup of water from an ever-full pail. The gap is immediately filled, and the level

of the water simultaneously adjusted, leaving absolutely no trace of what has been withdrawn. Only the individual suffers. What a mighty burst of heart there would be if we all could feel and suffer at the same time!

Nature makes no difference and knows no distinction between the living and the dead. The warm and tender rays of the sun, and its blistering heat, fall alike upon the crying, innocent babe and the lifeless, unfeeling corpse.

The sun does not shine to give us its necessary heat, without also bringing to light some new problem and pain for our over-troubled hearts to bear.

Murder, rape and greed look no different to Nature than goodness, virtue and unselfishness.

Tears were made for the things that God causes, laughter is the result of man's efforts.

XIII

IT is man's labor, man's work, man's achievement, that gives us the little desire that we have to live. How often do we prefer *death* to living life in our former condition, after our efforts have brought us to a point of vantage and comfort!

Death is always preferable to the living of a "dog's life!" And yet, with it all, the little improvement we have to-day, with the still remaining cruel conditions of Nature left to endure and fight, has not been worth the struggle through the black and bleak past. The price has been entirely too severe for the little that has been gained.

God gives man nothing; man gives man everything!

What sublime courage it was that made the pathfinders of the past sacrifice their lives, in order that their principles of truth

might triumph, so that another link might be made in the chain of progress that is endeavoring to break the spell of a tyrant power.

You must be made to know that for whatever desirable condition we have to-day we are indebted to heroic men and women of the past, who, in the days of infant progress, achieved a moral, physical and intellectual triumph.

The chair you sit on, the cup you drink from, the fork you eat with, the light you read by, the bed you sleep in, the heat that warms you, the shoes on your feet, the clothes upon your back, the hat upon your head, and every part and particle of improvement that has enriched the world with a little touch of human comfort are the result of the heroic labors of the men and women of the past, who victoriously fought the accursed and chaotic forces of Nature, so as to make life and living a little better.

But at every step and stage of progress the dogmatists have exerted their influence

toward retardation. What these dogmatists were unable to accomplish through fear and suppression, they accomplished through ostracism, and death. Human advancement and progress are foreign to the "believing" mind. The dogmatists are concerned only with the "supernatural." They want not the comforts of life here if they can secure those benefits "hereafter."

It is the attitude of the religious to belittle anything that is designed for human betterment. Their philosophy is, the more you suffer here, the less you will suffer "hereafter." Their humility to and fear of this "unseen" power is the most degrading trait in human beings. It is a frame of mind not only despicable and a hindrance in the face of progress, but even antagonistic to and destructive of all things worth while.

To them, the insanity of belief is of paramount importance, and is more sacred and holy than human life. Aye, human life has been so subordinated to this superstitious be-

lief that it meant death in the past to those who rejected it.

Rather observe some "holy day" than perform "work" to help some fellow human being in distress. Murder, rather than eat meat on a "forbidden day"! This frame of mind is one of the mental mysteries that science has yet to solve.

XIV

THE rotundity of the earth was discussed and its circumference scientifically measured hundreds of years before the supposed birth of Christ, and had not the "God believers" been so persistent in forcing their belief upon others, and had not Christianity been born, I can see how the discovery of America would have been accomplished about a thousand years before the discovery by Columbus; and the incalculable progress which would have been the consequence would have carried mankind beyond the boldest imagination of to-day, and placed us a thousand years nearer civilization.

Hero, a mathematician, who lived at the time when the Greek minds were the marvel of the world, invented a steam engine, which was used in experiments and was rapidly nearing completion and perfection, when, unfortunately, ignorant and destruc-

tive Religion, that was madly trampling upon everything of value, destroyed the famous Alexandrian Library wherein was kept a model of this engine. It also swept away the incalculable wealth of knowledge that had required ages to accumulate, and thereby completely annihilated the most priceless possessions that the human race ever owned.

But that is not all; it is only a fragment. For history at every stage of life shows the continual strife between the forces of progress and the religious fanatic and God believer.

What is that strange form of insanity that prompts people to torture and to destroy those who seek to emancipate them from the *Tyranny of God* and from the deluded belief in a hereafter?

The attitude of all, each and every one of us, should ever be the desire and willingness to greet a new idea, to support a new thought, to try a new proposal, to do all in our power to uphold the forces of progress,

to lend our help and to devote our energies in any direction that will ultimately lead us from the cruel forces and narrow limitations that are our lot to share.

To those who have no thought for these things, who care not what forces and conditions man must face, who take without thought and give only through compulsion, whose self-satisfied condition (made possible only by the heroic work of the martyrs of progress) make of them personal heroes, whose life is wrapped within the flicker of a day, who do not know, do not realize, and do not care about the fearful suffering of the world—I say to them to strut their intoxicated hour and pass away. The sooner they live their lives and the sooner they die, the better for the earth. It needs fertilization.

Were we as mentally progressive as we are materially advanced, what a wonderful and magnificent improvement over the present living conditions we would be enjoying! Every new invention, every new improve-

ment, would be immediately and universally installed, and every old and antiquated instrument and method would be discarded and destroyed. That which now seems only within the command of the households of the immensely wealthy, would be as popularly used and enjoyed as the now commonly used articles in the poorest households.

Think of existing to-day in a predominant percentage of dwellings for human beings where there is not found the essential bath-tub, or the still more essential toilet room!

Governments are instituted for the people's benefit, and shame upon such a government, in an enlightened age like to-day, that tolerates such a condition, when that government possesses the men, the means, the intellect and the materials to electrify the world!

The first and foremost essential in higher development is the comfort and conveniences in a home.

These are some of the conditions that the progressive minds of the world are trying to

solve and remedy. It is only a question of how much longer the majority of people will pay homage to an imaginary God for imaginary benefits in an imaginary life after death.

XV

IT is the antagonism of the dogmatic world, and the apathy of the rest, that is the cause of the mental progress of the world's not keeping pace with the material progress.

Better still, the universal application of the material progress has been far in advance of the universal acceptance of mental achievement. The automobile, the gigantic ocean liner, the talking machine, the electric fan, the elevator, the telephone and the other marvelous achievements of man are being used by the greater portion of the people, whose mental status belongs to the wheelbarrow, the simple chair, the ox cart and the tallow candle.

Slight is the realization by the users and beneficiaries of science's modern methods, of the heroic struggles and battles that the great men and women of the past suffered to make possible these accomplishments.

Oh, how many suffered torture and death at the hands of the very people they were striving to benefit!

This same fate has been met by all the brave and courageous, during the past, who have made any attempt to broaden the life and to ease the pain of the troubled heart of humanity.

The unselfish endeavors of man have made it possible to take the dumb matter of earth and mold it so the voices of the present can be heard by the ears of the future; so that several generations may hear and know, with a touch of human affection, the traits, features and characteristics of their ancestors. Language gives us their thoughts, the camera gives us their natural, life-like features and the phonograph their actual, living voices!

Nature never did so much. As far as Nature is concerned, bastardy may rule the world!

One of the comforts of life is that we live again in actions and scenes, which, although

they are apart from our own lives, really belong to the past or future races. But Nature sees to it that the births and deaths, the knowledge and acquaintance of each and every generation, are so closely allied that none of us is allowed to escape the suffering of the world and the agony of life and death. No person can avoid the pain and the terrible fear that all must endure.

No one person can live, move about and possess the varied improvements of the earth's materials all by himself. He is indebted to others for their accomplishments, and they in turn are indebted to him for the improvements he renders. In short, we are all so closely allied with the actions and lives of one another that there should be a mutual appreciation and a common understanding among all.

The farmer may know nothing about manufacturing; the manufacturer may know nothing about farming; the artist, the explorer, the thinker, the inventor and the sci-

entist may know nothing about any field of endeavor other than his own, yet all are interdependent.

With such a condition existing, and with the uncertainty of life forever staring us in the face, and *no one exempt* from its terrible enactment, it is a *marvelous* wonder to me why there exist so tenaciously in the human heart all the petty and aggravating tempers, prejudices and jealousies.

What man has done with the forces of Nature are inspiring deeds. What progress has been made in opposing the forces of Nature is marvelous. What man will accomplish in the future with the arrogant forces of Nature stimulates our hearts with the sweet satisfaction of a victory of the first magnitude.

But in the final analysis, what does it avail us?

Geologists tell us that the greater portion of the materials that we have taken from the field of Nature consists of the buried bones and bodies of our ancient ancestors, who

passed through greater periods of agony, torment, disease and death than we are finally and eventually to meet!

What sort of crust in the earth's formation are we to make? What will be the product of the future living forces that will utilize the materials that our bodies will make? What will be the future living forces?

It is fearfully sad to contemplate that life must continue and be subject to the miserable laws that now govern it.

Insect man, with his almost tireless industry, makes clothes to cover his ugly and awkward body; builds houses to shelter him from the winds and the torrents of Nature; fashions glittering palaces of amusement to cheer his troubled heart; compounds anæsthetics to ease his pain; carves wood to replace his broken limbs; molds metal to take the place of those things that Nature has made inadequate for his use. In short, man has improved upon Nature to uphold his frail body,

to strengthen his weak bones, and to soothe his tender heart.

That man, fighting the forces of Nature, has been able to accomplish so much is simply glorious, and this progress is an achievement of such wonderful magnitude that we are thrilled at the thought, and bow in grateful recognition for the benefits derived and the relief enjoyed.

But why did not God institute all the benefits for the immediate use of man, so they could be enjoyed upon the first manifestation of his understanding?

Why was it necessary to go through the fearful period of past history and gain, only after a most gigantic struggle, the few things that we now use for our comfort?

That these things could have been done is proved by the fact that man has done them. Fundamentally they always existed. Man has only discovered and applied them. And these things that we have gained to-day, from the struggles of the past, would have been

equally enjoyed by those who lived before us, with the same degree of benefit, just as the future will find, use and enjoy those things that we do not possess, and without which we shall be pinched, and pained, through the helter-skelter of this troublesome life.

I brand as brutal tyranny this scheme of life, that forces us to be a link in a long series of lives to produce something for the benefit of the far-distant future, that we, ourselves, imperatively need but shall not possess.

I cry and denounce and plead, in behalf of future humanity, to circumvent and to defeat this "sorry scheme of life," that uses us as an instrument to produce something that we cannot use, do not know about and have not the understanding to comprehend.

XVI

"IN GOD WE TRUST," on coins that represent our labor and our endeavor, is an insult to the intelligence, courage and independence of the people, and a stinging rebuke to those responsible for our progress.

A motto that more truthfully represents our material progress and intellectual develment would be: "In Science We Trust;" or, "Humanity and Justice Our Aim."

The more we eliminate God from us, the more we are *one without him,* the better for us all, the better for humanity, the better for all the world. The less we "know" of God, the less God that is "in us," the more *human* we become.

The greatest, most frightful and destructive wars of all time have been those which were started in "defense" of God, as if "he" cared what man says or does.

The most frightful and torturous instruments ever conceived by man are those that were made to force people to "believe in" God.

The history of religious persecution and torture is the horror of the world.

May I ask, where was God, and what did he do, to stop this frightful nightmare of torture committed in "his" name?

And may I answer for you, that he was where Moses was when the light went out?

Remember this: There will never be a solution to any of our fundamental problems, and mankind will never, in the full sense of the word, be free, as long as there exists in the human mind the insanity of religious belief. As long as God occupies a portion of our thoughts, mankind must be content to suffer the hatred and antagonism of man.

Let us make up our minds now, let us resolve now, to stop fighting one another, and fight God by helping one another.

Let us stop fighting our fellow prisoners and fellow sufferers, and fight God.

Let us help our fellow prisoners and fellow sufferers.

Let us cleanse our minds of this superstitious poison of an "after life," and work and labor for the good and welfare of Here and Now.

We possess the knowledge and the means and, within the span of only one day, could bring about the much-longed-for "Brotherhood of Man."

We could eliminate hatred from our hearts, and instill Justice as our guide. We could eradicate poverty from our midst and bring happiness to sorrowing mankind. We could blot out tyranny among men and exchange it for the priceless legacy of freedom and make the relation between man and man bear some semblance of humanity.

But—and I say this with redoubled conviction, and with all the power, force, energy and vehemence that I possess—if we are Na-

ture's best endeavor, if man is Nature's best product, if the Natural world is incapable of any improvement, and life will forever be made to submit to the tyrannical conditions of Nature, then it were better ten thousand times over, that life were never called into existence, and that the universe were null and void!

THE END

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